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Dear Representative,

I am writing to you to express my extreme dismay regarding HB 5232 and SB720, The Historic Preservation Modernization Act. I implore you to vote against these bills in your respective chambers.

As public servants, constituents frequently hear that you stand for strong communities and financial prudence. This is YOUR opportunity to live up to that mantra.

Why do I stand against these bills?

Self-interest: Heritage Hill in Grand Rapids has been my home for the last 8 years. Its not just a building with my stuff in it. Its a COMMUNITY. Its our HISTORY. Its a draw for TOURISM. People in our neighborhood interact with each other in a way that doesn't happen in other neighborhoods. We know and watch out for each other. We share a common bond in taking responsibility as caretakers for our community's past and our bright future. That comes from living in a historic district. Have you ever been on Lombard Street in San Francisco? While all historic districts in Michigan might not be that famous, we DO have something in common with Lombard Street. People come from all over the country and world to see our unique neighborhood. They come to see and experience something that doesn't exist anywhere else. And while they are here, THEY SPEND MONEY!

Beyond simple tourism, it drives local business. Unique shops and restaurants abound in historic districts and in Grand Rapids, that's where EVERYONE wants to be. Passing these bills will destroy the community and unique character that exists in these neighborhoods.

Lastly, I can't help but view these bills as a blatant power grab by individuals who want to build in historic districts but have to follow the same rules as the rest of us. The irony of that scenario is if these bills pass and the individuals get what they want, the bills will destroy the very thing that makes the neighborhood a desirable place to build in the first place!

Do the right thing. Save the communities we've all worked so hard to build. Vote against these bills.

Respectfully,

Kenneth Bauer